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# POEMS

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A. ROMNEY GREEN



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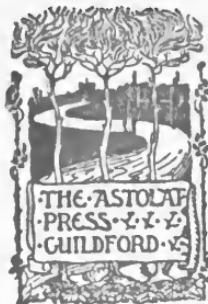
**POEMS.**



# POEMS

BY

A. ROMNEY GREEN



A. C. CURTIS  
THE ASTOLAT PRESS GUILDFORD

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A. ROMNEY GREEN**

## DEDICATION

TO MY MOTHER.

**T**O thee, in whom the seed of fire divine  
    Took hold, and quickened, and began to be,  
I yield the first fruits ; what is justly thine  
How can I choose but dedicate to thee ?

The natural heir aught that is clear and sweet  
    Is of thy own untutored melodies ;  
Aught that is deep and true from that rich sheet,  
    The poem of thy life, transcribéd is,

If aught there be :—and surely not a child  
    Of thine but drank of that ethereal stream  
That flows in thee.—O, pure and undefiled  
    To use the spirit and express the dream

We owe to thee ; where we have failed the blame  
Is ours, where prospered thine should be the fame.



# NATAL

AN ODE.

In respect to its theory of the war this poem may  
be regarded as a pendant to "Meroz, An Ode."

I NEVER dreamed, sweet summer-belted Land,  
Though winter-capped, whose uplands parchéd brown  
Or grassy hills with many a torrent spruit  
From thy mysterious Berg come rolling down  
To the rich coast and that voluptuous town ;  
Whose flowery shores upon the Indian sea  
Dream all day long, and every luscious fruit  
Bear to the constant sun ; whose odours fanned  
By thy warm gales the grateful soul expand  
With thoughts of heaven—where with my lovely bride  
To other ends I came in fond pursuit  
Of orange-wreathéd peace beneath a sky  
For ever blue ; where stood our pleasant home  
On those green heights that overlook the foam,  
And languish for the purple sea ; where I  
Dreamed many things—fair Land, I did not dream  
That thy young life would first regenerate be  
In this too rude but not unwelcome stream  
Of cleansing war—the dread medicament  
Of spirits cloyed with dull prosperity,  
And sweet luxurious peace.—The crimson tide  
Of battle pours from every mountain side,

## NATAL.

The blood of men that perish to redeem  
The souls of men—the blood of nations bent,  
One on a mighty struggle to be free,  
The other her great freedom so to use  
Ev'n as, to uses natural or divine,  
In this half-light by which we are toiling still  
With barbarous tools but no unkindly will,  
A people's conscience and the civic Muse  
Direct.—Fair Land, the odour and the bloom,  
Each aromatic shrub and flowering tree  
With whose sweet name we shall remember thee ;  
Fields of banana, sugar, maize, and pine ;  
Groves where the orange and the lemon shine  
Like stars out of their shadowy firmament ;  
Those feathery cusps of scarlet flower that plume  
The leafless grey stems of the kafir boom ;  
The prickly cactus ; the delicious scent  
Of the great blue-gums ; the perpetual sigh  
Of ocean rising from that angry bar  
To whisper in our wreathéd balcony ;  
At night soft tales beneath an alien star  
Of homes beyond that whispering ocean far ;  
And the white moon-flowers shedding through the gloom  
Waves of intoxicating sweet perfume—  
These sights, and sounds, and scents rememberéd are  
With trampling armies and the noise of war.  
Like a rich mist they rise, and in their room  
Armed men that spring to meet a warrior's doom  
Or find renown, with aspirations high  
Inflame the soul and fill the charmed eye.  
We ached for war ; the soldiers diet spare,  
The march, the star-beholding camp, to share ;

The desk, the office, and the bower to fly,  
Haunts of pale avarice and dark-eyed care,  
Unhonoured ease and hateful luxury ;  
Whilst oversea her sunburned patriots come  
For love the Empire's quarrel to assume.—  
O, fair Natal ! thou beauteous Land for whom  
Men have at last rememberéd how to die,  
O, flourish bravely o'er the soldiers' tomb,  
Make good his dreams, keep green his memory.

## THE WORLD'S WISDOM.

YOU warn me—kindly, doubtless, you intend—  
That what I now have set my hand to do,  
Others, with heads as clear and hearts as true,  
In venturing suffered such, or such, an end ;—  
And well might their impetuous folly mend  
The world's poor wisdom, such as this from you :—

Considerate wisdom how to curb and tame  
The aspiring soul, to point the dolorous tale—  
Less faith to dare than prudence not to fail—  
Where this pale cast of wisdom spoiled his flame,  
Who hath been found, the least of those who claim,  
Our cautious emulation, to prevail ?

This is thy wisdom of the worldly wise ;  
To err not from the straitened ways of use ;  
Even a generous sanction to refuse  
To that high purpose in the pleading eyes  
Of those who seek some nobler enterprise,  
Some less familiar destiny would choose.

Such must their own experience fulfil ;  
But wherefore make it harder than need be  
For want of help that might have come from thee ?—  
Provoke the indomitable blind “ I will,”  
The only office thine, whose wisdom still  
Prevents like night the soul that would be free ?

Let come what will; in failure though I chance  
 More than the loss of that I hoped to win,  
 With scorn or pity, yet the light within  
 Is fed by noble failure; men may glance  
 Derisively—nay, friends may look askance,—  
 When I least conscious am of shame or sin.

Judge no man by his action; were I told  
 To-morrow of some proven friend's disgrace—  
 Failure—or, worse, some deed unquestioned base :—  
 Do noisy facts the secret truth unfold?  
 And shall I judge, who knew him from of old,  
 I, who have read his nature in his face?

So I should justify my deed in vain  
 To those best judges who have loved me best;  
 They will absolve my purpose unconfessed;  
 And, when the chaff is winnowed from the grain,  
 If but a few so proved my friends remain,  
 I shall be well content to spare the rest.

Who seems to fail how often most succeeds!  
 Who seems successful most how often wrought  
 Only the dream and shadow of his thought!  
 High purposes in his imperfect deeds  
 Are all that man can boast; but these he needs,  
 Lest what great power he have should come to nought,

Insatiable, pure; that not his own  
 Desire of ease prescribes, nor greed of place  
 In the industrious world; to these we trace  
 All high and fearless action; hence alone  
 The immortal artist borrows light unknown  
 To the mere use of art, the poet grace.

For us, however of a lesser breed,  
The universal law holds none the less ;  
He questions not of failure or success  
Whose nobler purpose hath inspired the deed ;  
The consequence by righteous heaven decreed  
He will abide, and in the end shall bless.

Look not too far ; it doth demean the soul ;  
But to its virtue thy fair enterprise  
Commend with instant faith ; have only eyes  
For the strait path and for the shining goal ;  
What thou must, suffer ; what thou canst, controul ;  
But let misfortune take thee by surprise.

However hazardous the issue be  
My purpose holds the adventure to pursue ;  
The soul may live, and weather all things through—  
Make all experience welcome as the sea  
To prove her course undriven there, and free,  
Her starry loves significant and true.

## THE TRYST.

HOURS of the long blue summer day  
Have passed in tedious splendour by ;  
The last pale rose hath flushed away  
Out of the western sky.

Deep in their shadowy sylvan bower  
A lover waits the appointed hour ;  
His heart is beating high ;  
He waits, but has not long to wait ;  
His Love is at the garden gate,  
And they will steal an hour from Fate  
Although it were to die.

A field unseen had she to pass  
Ere just below that sheltering oak  
Her footsteps in the moving grass  
On his faint spirit broke.  
She comes from the devouring light  
Of festal halls into the night ;  
Beneath her rich white cloak  
Are flowers and jewels—the amorous air  
Of heaven is in her starlit hair—  
Light-footed, eager-hearted, fair  
She comes upon the stroke.

Their deathless vow, in any word  
Unbreathed, but spoken from their eyes  
Only those listening stars have heard

## THE TRYST.

That shape our destinies.  
If with the stars they could foreknow  
The pains of love, the starry woe,  
How fortunate and wise  
They two would seem if they might stand  
Thus heart to heart, and hand in hand,  
Forever in that charméd land  
That shadowy paradise.

## AMOR IN EXTREMIS.

THOU askest if it be indeed a sin  
To let the indomitable tyrant in,  
Or whether sin with Love can never be?—  
Is it a sin if some tremendous tide  
Sweep down the bulwarks of presumptuous pride  
That man builds up against the eternal sea?—

Ambition some, some poverty, disease,  
Or filial piety, forbid to please  
This tyrant too importunate: and still  
Their monitors conspire with curious art  
To guard that virgin citadel, the heart,  
And raise up walls about the faltering will.

O, let them fall! for, not to be withheld,  
Sweet heaven commands to trust the mighty flood,  
The tide of love, which constant is to heaven,  
Whilst from our feet the great world slips away,  
Blindly revolving its laborious day,  
With all that we have hoped for, feared, or striven.

Seductive, sweet, as to the sea the moon,  
Though earth forbid, doth heaven present the boon  
Of love, the crown of life; who hesitates  
Must serious reason use; 'twere not unwise  
With sudden hands to wrest so fair a prize  
From the arbitrament of doubtful Fates.

Nay, that we love at all ; that love to us  
Appears so fair by ways so dangerous,  
Must argue heaven-ordained occasion here  
Of our true heritage, which to have proved  
Ours by desert and loyalty unremoved  
Shall make it doubly ours and doubly dear.

And yet thou knowest I had no wilful scheme  
In this rash love save to indulge a dream  
Unknown to thee ; our stars in heaven have erred  
Each to the other from its broken arc ;  
Just so a pair of children in the dark  
Had met, and so caught hands without a word.

So fair thou art, so loved ; and blest with all  
That could so fair and loved a thing befall ;  
So native here, but to the world so new,  
Where various trouble is, and wasting care :—  
Is't not a sin the rose so rich and rare  
To pluck from these bright gardens where it grew ?—

But, unadorning these, to which belong  
Thy so loved graces, dost thou fear to wrong  
Me, who shall wrong thee—how should I withhold,  
When thy dear will chimes with my own desire ?—  
That—“ ill-bestowed,” thou sayest,—my love will tire,  
Or thine become less precious than of old ?  
  
Or dost thou bid me seek—the world is wide—  
An easier, say, but not a fairer bride—  
The rose without a thorn ?—O, vain debate !—  
Had I not found, as I have surely done,  
The best and loveliest underneath the sun,  
In finding thee I owe enough to Fate.

Thou sayest—and through all thy sweet advice  
Runs womanlike the thirst for sacrifice,  
The fear of wilful, undeservéd, joy—  
That not alone their ban forbids our love,  
But thy unworthiness; that use must prove  
How poor thy virtues, time thy charms destroy.

This is the task of Love: that he refine  
Clay the most human to the most divine  
Unto the need of one enamoured soul.  
Love asks the fond, the pure and faithful, heart;  
Of one frail nature by that heavenlier part  
He is content to know and judge the whole.

And thy sweet seniority—a grace  
More to adorn thy soul, but in thy face  
All unperceived—what could more deeply move  
Faith, passion, chivalry?—so wondrous fair,  
Inviolate still, thou to attend my prayer  
Stayed in mid-heaven, nay, made a child, by love!

Say thou hast but ten years—the sweetest ten  
Of womanhood that is vouchsafed to men—  
Ere those rich charms do pale:—the rose of June  
No lovelier is than the frail autumn leaf;  
Nor were there lawful cause to see with grief  
That sunlike beauty changed to the moon,

Less prodigal of warmth and light, a guise  
More eloquent to my admiring eyes  
Of thy pure history and the eternal law  
Which the deep heavens obey—a face to wean  
My spirit from the earth to things unseen,  
Even as those waters the pale moon doth draw.

## AMOR IN EXTREMIS.

Once fair and well-beloved, the envious wage  
Is never forfeited to wasting age

    Still to be fair ; but if more sacred ties  
Do not avail thee in the after years,  
If all in vain the tribute of thy tears,  
    These hard-won meetings, desperate "goodbyes,"

Then vain are all things beautiful and deep,  
And love a dream, and life a fevered sleep

    Well lost in that profounder sleep to be.  
But should my loyal devotion, early faith,  
Tire for a day, think how the mournful wraith  
    Of thy loved form at night would steal on me,

Mysteriously fair, as first it stole,  
Insidiously, sweetly, on my soul,

    As ne'er before insidious and sweet :—  
Dost thou not think that face, those wistful eyes,  
Where no reproach, but only pardon, lies,

    Would win me back again to these dear feet ?

Though Love, who dwells with his prophetic eye  
On every omen, of a morning sky

    So red and angry well may augur rain,  
Could aught in nature so unlovely be  
That love should ever be desired by thee,  
    And, where thy lover is, desired in vain ?

A summer day of its exceeding heat  
May changed be to thunder ; love, too sweet,

    By its own passion clouded ; heaven, too near  
The unstable earth, may banefully excite  
Humours and heats, its deadly opposite,

    Which break down all the electric atmosphere ;

And love be seamed with fire, and judgment done ;  
But o'er those warring elements the sun

Is shining still, whose witnesses they are ;  
And life and love brought terribly to birth  
Where that great peace is broken by the earth  
Which doth prevail in heaven from star to star :—

Where soul in flesh takes wondrous power and form ;  
And not the laws which govern tide and storm

Are marvellous then as those which rule the soul—  
Rule from the tropic lightnings of its youth  
To where, in that vast silence north and south,  
The aurora streams above the frozen pole.

Life is distraught with dangers ever fresh  
'Twixt heaven and earth, the spirit and the flesh,  
But Love the pilot of that shadowy clime—  
The ambassador of heaven, lest we forget  
Our lineage high, through all the world to set  
His royal standard o'er the sons of Time.

A self-taught power and providence to use,  
Shall we the bright insignia refuse,  
The starry privilege of love forego ?  
Can such affections on the heart prevail  
Only to prove the will that must not fail—  
Is it for nothing that I love thee so ?—

Start at thy coming, and divinely burn  
With every gesture of thy fondness learn—  
Thy instant soul in each unspoken thought  
That lightens inwardly celestial grace,  
And vanishes across the perfect face  
To that pure spirit so expressly wrought ?—

Feel every delicate colour, scent, and sound,  
Blent evermore with thee, and broken round

Thy melting path, like moonlight on the sea—  
From the dark world a fragrant incense drawn,  
Even as its shining vapours to the dawn,  
And all my being lost in prayer to thee ?

Is it to voyage with those pale faces set  
Across the sea, that travel and forget—

Strive to forget—that they have ever known  
Such perilous joy, such cruel beauty ; torn  
By sleepless passion ; through a world forlorn  
Of hope and comfort wandering alone ?

Sometimes, star-gazing there, they will be caught  
Out of their woe into the heaven of thought,

Till love grow far away and little worth ;  
Sometimes they will be faithful ; sometimes, numb  
With that long agony, they will succumb  
Pleasure to seek of the unhallowéd earth.

I think that all thy lovers of the sweet  
Spring days gone by are kneeling at thy feet

To urge my cause ; to plead against the doom  
How cruel they know ; whilst every poet's heart  
That loved and suffered leaps to take my part

With stern entreaties from the loveless tomb ;

His, the halt poet, that cruel fair could sting  
The world to wander like a wounded thing ;

And his to whom Beatrice the shades of Hell  
Made easy, and the steep ascent to heaven ;  
And his, the unfortunate, ignobly driven  
By Leonora to a maniac's cell.

And other two there be, with faces pale  
And sweet from musing on a different tale,  
Who died in one another's arms ; they learned  
The luxury, and they would dare the pain—  
Giovani's knife and Dante's hell—again,  
Of desperate love that is not unreturned.

Wilt thou not learn of these ?—must those pure eyes  
Make so unkind a Providence—be wise  
To smile at love, as even those that prove  
Victorious dare not smile—whilst heaven and hell  
A cloud of such dire witnesses compel  
To urge the headlong argument of love ?

Wilt thou not learn of these ?—the mighty flood,  
The tide of love, is full ; 'tis time we stood  
To sea ; the ebb, they say, will leave behind  
No haven here, but empty channels strewn  
With shadowy wrecks beneath a waning moon,  
The dry and empty bottoms of the mind.

Cold blows the wind ; the sky is overcast  
With driving clouds ; the voices of the past,  
The curlews' cries, are borne from shore to shore ;  
The salt pools glimmer to the moon ; afar  
The milk-white breakers thunder on the bar,  
Through the long night returning nevermore.

Through the long night returning not to us :—  
Black river bottoms—places hideous  
And bare, where once there flowed the living tide  
Of passion—'tis a world of ghastly dreams,  
Where loveless lives are spent like those thin streams  
The interminable sandy flats divide.

In that dark world no ray of hope can reach  
The abandoned soul; each interest new and each  
    New joy serves only to renew his loss.  
Nothing I did but I should wish for thee  
The scheme to praise or the result to see,  
    Which without thee were dull and empty dross.

Do thou but hear them, Sweet, and in thy breast  
Permit, as it is pure, each deep behest  
    Of Nature; breathe no heavier cloud between  
Our loves, unsure of satisfaction here,  
Which yet, to some diviner purpose dear,  
    Can never be as if they had not been.

O, pitiful, between those slow replies,  
But, O, how sweet, that face, those far off eyes,  
    Where all thy soul is set to understand!  
Distressed in choice; most fearful of the wrong  
Where most inclined; but willing to be strong—  
    But happy, since I hold the little hand—

Was ever any face so fair before?—  
Or I thy lover if I still forbore  
    Thee to advise too warmly, thee to woo?—  
So tender, and so infinitely sweet,  
That I could die in kissing these dear feet,  
    Who am not worthy to unloose thy shoe.

O, if sweet death and sudden were decreed  
To all mankind, how all their hearts that bleed  
    With long desire would hasten to obey  
The one great law, and with delicious sighs  
Each to his love, and with adoring eyes,  
    The whole creation breathe itself away.

'Tis Love shall turn the world to God ; as soon  
From making these laborious days the moon

Shall lay the earth to rest ; the tides that run  
So fiercely now, and in such narrow ways,  
Shall have their will, and bring the earth to gaze  
Mutely beneath a steadfast seeming sun.

## A FAREWELL.

SUMMER, so sweetly ushered in,  
Hath passed, my Love, hath passed away ;  
And if to love hath been a sin  
Judgment is done to day.  
Would it were death, and swiftly done  
Ere those dark clouds have veiled the sun !—  
How can we ever say  
Slow words, a death in life to knell,  
Of agonizing, long, “ farewell ? ”

That we must always love, our chief  
Desire and woe, our faith so fair,  
Shall with the fading autumn leaf  
Make sweetness of despair.  
At eventide before my eyes  
The vision of thy face shall rise,  
And float above me there,  
As when the evening star appears  
More beautiful through mists of tears.

Thy mournéd loveliness shall haunt  
My heart through many a wintry hour ;  
O'er mine thy dreaming soul shall vaunt  
Its old mysterious power.  
The silvering buds shall all unsheathe  
Dim lights of thee—a perfume breathe  
Of thee from every flower,  
And whispers from the early green  
Of what hath been, of what hath been.

## THE AUTUMN WIND.

THE sad, the wild, the Autumn Wind,  
All vanished sweet things  
From the dark heaven I call to mind ;  
The deathly odour clings  
Of summers that are left behind  
On my tempestuous wings.

Awhile from leafy bough to bough  
I led the summer on ;  
And many a lover's whispered vow  
Bore to the joyful sun ;  
But all the sweets of summer now,  
The sweets of love are gone.

And now, to speak their general grief  
In one severer strain,  
From places of the withered leaf  
I mourn the life, how vain,  
The loves, the joys of men, how brief,  
Through all the night complain ;

Their spring, how desperately sweet  
With promise—only given  
The summer of a short conceit—  
Their leaf-like souls, how driven,  
When earth is dead beneath their feet,  
On all the winds of heaven !

## PHYLLIS TO DEMOPHOON

AFTER OVID.

DEMOPHOON, thy royal hostess, I,  
Phyllis of Rhodope, a just complaint  
Make of thy absence now too long. When first  
That hornéd moon grew to the full, we said,  
Thy mooréd ships were to be mine. But now  
Four times the moon hath waned, four times fulfilled  
Her shining sphere, and the Sithonian seas  
Murmur no tidings of the ships of Greece.

If thou countest the days which we in love  
Reckon so carefully, thou wilt perceive  
That my rebuke comes not before its time.  
Hope lingered long ; for ever are we slow  
That to believe which to believe is pain—  
Pain to the loyal and unwilling heart  
Of love.—I have deceived myself for thee ;  
And often have I thought the stormy south  
Would hurry back thy sails ; and I have cursed  
Theseus because he would not let thee go—  
If it was Theseus who detained thee thus ;—  
Or off the shoals of Hebrus I have feared  
Thy ship was swallowed in the foaming sea.  
For thee, O faithless, I have tired the Gods  
With prayer before their incense-burning shrines ;  
And often, when the sea and sky grew fair  
With some propitious wind, said to myself,

" If he is living surely he will come."  
My trusting love hath now imagined all  
Misfortunes that can stay the course of love ;  
All fond excuses I have made for thee.

But thou art absent still ; nor do the Gods,  
By whom thou swearest, favour—or thy love  
For Phyllis doth not urge—thy safe return.  
Demophoon, alike thy words, thy sails,  
Thou gavest to the wind—words that were void,  
Sails whose return I still await in vain.  
Tell me what have I done save that I loved  
Thee all unwisely ? by that very sin  
I should have more endeared myself to thee :—  
My only fault, O faithless, that I gave  
Thee hospitality and too much love—  
Fault that should find favour at least with thee !  
Where are thy vows, thy honor, and the hand  
That clasped my own in love ? where is the God  
That was so often on thy perfidious lips ?  
Where now is Hymen, pledge of bliss to be,  
The sponsor for long years of wedded love ?  
To me thou swearest by the stormy sea,  
Which, having sailed so often, thou mightest hope  
Safely to sail again ; by thy grandsire  
Of the white horses—if 'tis truly he—  
Who calms the stormy sea, thou swearest too ;  
By Venus and her weapons, lamp and bow,  
So direfully strong against myself ;  
By Juno, genial goddess, who presides  
O'er wedded happiness ; and by the rites—  
The mystic rites—of her who bears the torch.

If every deity outraged by thee  
Should wreak their wrath on thee, thou, one alone,  
Would'st not suffice their fury to appease.

And I in madness even re-equipped  
Thy broken fleet, that safely might depart  
The ship in which thou left'st me ; oars beside  
I gave to urge thy flight ; my hurt, alas !  
My own goodwill inflicted on myself.  
I trusted in the soothing words of which  
Thou had'st so many ; in thy name and race ;—  
I trusted in thy tears—and are they too  
Taught to deceive ?—are they too false, to flow  
As they are bid ?—I trusted in the Gods ;—  
Wherefore so many pledges ? I had been  
Enough deceived by any one of them.

And yet I grieve not that I gave to thee  
Harbour and hospitality ; but these  
Ought to have been the limit of my gift.  
How shamed I am I added unto these  
The gift of my own self ;—ah, how I wish  
The night before that one had been my last,  
Whilst yet I might have died a virgin queen.  
I hoped the best thinking it was my due—  
A hope how just that looks but for desert !  
In truth it is no glory to betray  
A trusting girl ; surely my innocence  
Deserved respect ; yet by thy lying words  
I was deceived, a woman, and in love.  
May the Gods grant this deed of thine to be  
The summit of thy fame ; and may there stand  
Thy statue in thy city midst the race

Of old Aegeus ; and thy noble sire's,  
Magnificent with titles, opposite.  
Where shall be read of Scyron and the great  
Procrustes, Sinis, and the Minotaur ;  
Of Thebes subdued in war ; and Centaurs too,  
A monstrous brood, despatched ; and the reverse  
Of Pluto's dusky arms ; but hard at hand  
Thine with these words : " The man by whom a queen  
" Suffered herself to be deceived in love."

From that brave record of thy father's deeds  
Was Ariadne's foul betrayal all  
Thou could'st admire ?—that deed which calls alone  
For censure or excuse the only one  
That thou could'st imitate ?—thy sire's false faith  
All he bequeathed, false-hearted son, to thee ?  
She has at last—I do not envy her—  
A better husband ; and she sits aloft  
Drawn by tamed tigers ; but the Thracian youth,  
Those whom I scorned of old, avoid me now,  
Saying that I preferred a foreigner :  
Saying, " Let her to learned Athens go ;  
" Some other one shall rule o'er warlike Thrace."  
All things are judged by the event :—be all  
His hopes in vain who argues thus, and his  
Deep purposes all uneventful be.  
If now the sea were foaming with thine oars  
I should be quickly said to have desired  
My people's welfare even as my own.  
And yet I never dreamed of them ; nor will  
My dream be crowned, nor ever will my baths  
And festal palaces resound with thee.

That form of thine for ever is impressed  
Upon my eyes, tearing thyself away,  
When off the sick and dizzy shore thy fleet  
Hung just about to sail ; and thou didst dare  
To embrace me, and to fall upon my neck  
With kisses passionate and fond as though  
Thou could'st not bear to part ; and with my tears  
To intermingle thine, and to complain  
Of such a cruelly propitious wind ;  
And, breaking off at last, "Phyllis," thou said'st,  
"Most certainly expect again thy own  
"Demophoon."—Ah, me ! should I expect  
Thee who didst leave me never to return,  
And those white sails that o'er the faint blue edge  
Of ocean dropped for ever ?

## Yet I do

Expect thee still ; O come, though late, to her  
Who loves thee so, that thou may'st keep thy pledge  
In all except the time.—Ah, what am I,  
I that am so unhappy, praying for ?  
Ev'n now perhaps some other wife is thine,  
Some other love ill-omenéd for me.  
No Phyllis did'st thou know, I ween, so soon  
As I was lost to thy forgetful eyes.  
Ah me ! should'st thou enquire who Phyllis is,  
Or whence she comes ?—I, who did give to thee,  
Demophoon, in thy extreme distress,  
Our Thracian harbours and a splendid home ;  
Whose wealth my own increased ; whose want my wealth  
Gave many gifts and would have given more ;  
I who, a queen, subjected unto thee  
The very realms that King Lycurgus ruled

So niggardly of yore, too great to brook  
A woman's power ; from ice-clad Rhodope  
Stretching to where Haemus with pleasant groves  
Is shadowy, and the sacred Hebrus rolls  
His waters to the sea ; I who, a maid,  
Gave my own self to thee, whose girdle thou  
Unfastened with thy perfidious hand.  
Over those bridals croaked the ill-omened bird  
A warning hoarse, and pale Tisiphone  
For vengeance shrieked upon the accursed deed.  
Alecto too was there, her tresses wreathed  
With writhing snakes ; and like to funereal brands  
Our torches glowed upon the ghastly night.

Now in my agony I pace the rocks,  
The reedy dunes, and every height from which  
The open sea is spread before mine eyes.  
Whether day gladdens the earth, or the chill stars  
Are bright above, for ever do I watch  
What winds are on the ocean ; when I see  
Sails far away at once I think the Gods  
Are kind to me at last ; down to the sea  
I run, and scarce the fickle waves that beat  
The everlasting shore can turn me back ;  
And, as the sails draw nearer, less and less  
Firmly I stand, and faint away and fall  
At last into my maiden's outstretched arms.

There is a bay curved like a bended bow,  
With lofty headlands jagged and abrupt.  
Hence have I thought to hurl my body down  
Into the waves below ; if thou dost still

Delay thy coming this will be the end.  
There will the tides conspire and bear my body  
Unburiéd to thee, where, 'fore thine eyes,  
It shall compel thy pity at the last.  
For though thou should'st excell iron and flint  
And thy own self in hardness, thou wilt say,  
“ Not thus, O Phyllis, should'st thou follow me.”  
A fire within me burns for nothing less  
Than death to end my shame ; and on my tomb  
Shall be inscribed thy name—thy name by whom  
I was betrayed ; such envious words as these  
Shall keep alive thy fame : “ Demophoon,  
“ Her guest, of his royal bride’s unhappy death  
“ The treacherous cause became ; a victim she  
“ Of her deep love and his inconstancy.”

## THE BURNS CENTENARY.

O, FICKLE is the Muse, and hard,  
Who hath by many a latter bard  
Thy envious laurel richly starred,  
If I may share  
No such her genial regard,  
And tuneful care !

For though long since thy great compeer  
Had ravished every heart and ear  
Of those to whom thy memory dear  
Can never die ;  
And moved the quick insidious tear,  
The reverie high ;—

Though he, in fame and hapless fate  
So soon in heaven to be thy mate,  
Came that fair eve to dedicate  
A lovely bloom—  
Himself how lowly, thee how great—  
Upon thy tomb ;—

(Soon 'neath the quiet tomb he slept,  
Himself no less divinely wept;  
Himself the would-be love-adept,  
The sufferer lone,  
No friendlier spirit could have leapt  
To greet thy own.)

## THE BURNS CENTENARY.

Superfluous now, and less divine  
Sons of the long illustrious line,  
We emulate the high design  
    To sing thy praise ;  
And more with alien splendours shine  
    Those deathless bays.

Since it has thus become the mode,  
Forgive, from thy august abode  
That I should here increase the load,  
    And swell the crime,  
Of flatteries so much bestowed  
    In honied rhyme.

I think, of all the laurelled host  
Wandering Elysian fields, that most  
Thy else not unattainted ghost  
    To aspirants here  
Of our peculiar sin might boast  
    A spirit clear.

Untaught, O happy soul and wise,  
The vacant-glorious verse to prize ;  
Untaught to polish and revise,  
    Or how to use  
The arts that attitudinize  
    Our modern Muse ;

Taught to exhale, as the fresh earth  
To utter flowers, thy natural mirth ;  
As hurricanes the bitter north  
    To speak thy woe,  
Thy lays reveal the artless worth  
    Of long ago.

No ruder breath thy Atlantic curled ;  
With such untutored sweetness purled  
The river whence that book was hurled  
Which did not woo  
The homage a degenerate world  
Contends to do.

Since Shakespere's not a soul so clear  
Of mean ambitions ; quick to hear  
The immortal harmonies severe  
Of love and pain  
Earth had brought forth ; and now thy peer  
Doth not remain.

To Wordsworth, Byron, each some trace  
Of thought or passion thine ; some grace  
Or splendour of thy Titan race  
Thou didst bequeathe ;  
A soul that in these latter days  
We hardly breathe.

Unhealthy spirits, undevout,  
We boast our various-sided doubt ;  
We write discursively about  
The things ye proved,  
Or suffered, ere ye sang them out  
So much beloved.

And over our laborious art  
Presides a genius less the heart  
Than that pale demon of the Mart  
That sucks our power,  
And in our very love bears part  
To blight the flower.

## THE BURNS CENTENARY.

Thou, to glad Nature more akin,  
And used the generous love to win  
Of many a rustic heroine,  
    Wouldst often tell  
Some rude desire, impetuous sin,  
    Or wild farewell.

But sweetly, naturally told,  
Those loves were never bought for gold,  
Nor written only to be sold ;  
    The will malign,  
Offending where the heart is cold,  
    Was never thine ;

But native virtue, still preserved  
Without the law ; or, if thou swerved  
Thence, by some direful chance unnerved—  
    Ah, who shall blame  
Whatever deep experience served  
    The sacred flame ?

We see and love thee ; leaving now  
The brilliant throng that wreathed thy brow  
To reassume a youthful vow,  
    A rustic life ;  
Thy hand again upon the plough,  
    And Jean thy wife.

And now the sire we fondly see  
Thy sons instructing at thy knee ;  
And now the truant lover, free  
    Among the groves  
Where to be loved immortally,  
    Thy Chloris roves.

And though by each too passionate sense  
Borne to the earth, deriving thence  
Antaeus-like thy spirit intense  
    To strive and shine;  
Recruiting thence each large expense  
    Of power divine.

And now upon thy untimely end,  
Dissentient all, our hearts attend  
With woe; the thunder-clouds descend  
    Upon thy head;  
To happier realms our prayers commend  
    The mighty dead.

Thou couldst not prosper here; subdue  
A soul to loftier dictates true  
The ignoble interests to pursue,  
    The arts contrive,  
Which, save with some insatiate few,  
    Suffice and thrive;

Nor yet renounce the world with those  
Who less regard its flattering shows,  
And for its thorns condemn the rose  
    Of youth and love,  
Some heavenlier virtue to propose,  
    Or joy to prove.

Unskilled to rule, but not content  
To serve the flesh; improvident,  
But uncorrupt, thy spirit went  
    A devious course;  
In virtuous effort foiled, or spent  
    In vain remorse.

## THE BURNS CENTENARY.

But how to Judge thee!—shall we chide  
Great Nature; for their laughing pride  
Her roses; for its headlong tide  
    The mountain stream;  
The poet's life, the poet's bride,  
    The poet's dream?

Nay, for herself she wields the scourge  
Her own too sweet excess to purge;  
Her starry purposes converge  
    Beyond the sphere  
Of passion or ruin to which they urge  
    Her creatures here.

Her poets—least do they require  
Our censure—to the withering fire  
Of their rich life and long desire  
    A hapless prey,  
As from a slow funereal pyre,  
    Consume away.

Thy soul is to the empyrean gone;  
The verse in which it strove and shone,  
Quickened so painfully, lives on,  
    And lightens forth,  
To shed a lustre never wan  
    About the North.

## MEROZ.

AN ODE. 1895.

“Curse ye Meroz, saith the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

YE victims, cruelly forsaken, dead,  
And unavenged, whose dust and ashes piled  
In murderous drifts the winter through have been  
Unwept, unburied, on your desert hills ;  
Or whom to weep, and dress your mouldering bed  
With some poor weed, in those sparse vales but green  
That once you loved, new-coming April mild  
Perhaps from heaven a gentle shower distils ;  
Or, hurled from desperate crags, whose bones unseen  
Lie sepulchred in many a dark ravine,  
Washed by the melting snow ; you, spoiled of bread,  
Disarméd, broken-hearted, crushed by dread  
Insensate force, by hideous art beguiled ;  
Whose streaming blood by infidels was shed,  
That stains the Orient red,  
And that great river to the Persian sea,  
Your martyrdom is also on our head !  
Though of your blood all seeming undefiled,  
Their dumb accomplices perfidious we,  
Who left the tyrants still unvisited

To indulge and flatter their malignant wills.  
O, faithless that we are, and pitiless,  
How shall our ancient name be reconciled,  
And its long tenure of a glory fled ?  
Our memory by the ages unreviled,  
In whose ill-gotten custody you bled ?  
How shall sweet nature purify and bless  
Once more the wilderness  
Incarnadine, whose thirsty soul was fed  
With rivers of your blood ? its fields are spread  
'Neath heavens that smile no more, of loveliness  
And joy for ever disinherited.  
The wind now mourns you there with void alarms  
Of death by night ; and now more awful calms  
Than death ; ere this dire end to your distress  
Could not you move the blasts of heaven your wild  
Entreaties to address  
To the four quarters of the earth in arms ?  
They heard, but might not be solicited ;  
And o'er the victims of its vile excess  
That hideous soldiery smiled.  
Your wives, your daughters, suffered nothing less  
Than your strong men, but there was no redress ;  
Your very mothers were not spared with child.

From your blood-stainéd mountain solitude  
You called upon our laggard arms in vain ;  
And over many a fruitful vale and plain,  
O'er many a smiling sea and mellowing wood,  
There ebbed away unheard that piteous strain ;  
Or in our ears the long complaint would rise  
Only to fall again.

For men pursue, as they have still pursued,  
Unmoved, through many a blind vicissitude  
Of joy, desire, and pain,  
Each that vain shadow, burying like a hood  
His soul in darkness, that too envious good  
Self-chosen next ; and, in a softer mood,  
If some high motive, generous, pure, and wise,  
Employ a chord to which the heart replies,  
This earth-born progeny, an impious brood,  
Of hopes and fears, with base solicitude,  
Correct the will, the impulsive hand refrain.  
Or, newly burning from the tale of blood,  
With wrath, and fear, and pity, in their eyes,  
Fired by the tale of those death agonies,  
Some furious prophet on the platform stood,  
The priest his prayer, the merchant gave his dole ;  
Unprofitable charities, for where  
The heart is sick the members are not whole.  
Our old heroic virtue fails and dies ;  
Our soul is drugged with small philosophies,  
Yea, dead to indignation or surprise.  
And such a race, despoiled by time, that thief  
Of power unused by love, unmoved by grief,  
Shall not escape the avenging destinies.  
The inevitable curse we too must share  
Here to accomplish that prophetic scroll  
Of what has been ; this way the high green leaf  
Is faded, and a people lose controul  
Among the nations, and the arts, their chief  
Glory and use, decay ; but whilst they spare  
The oppressed and weak, whilst they espouse or dare  
Some cause forlorn, some arduous enterprise,

The fair but unsuspected flowers arise,  
To adorn the state, or to instruct the soul,  
Of art, the child of virtue ;—flowers how brief,  
Now they are forced with vain expense and care,  
Our various arts and letters !—nothing worth—  
Fair-seeming, ineffectual, as are  
These diplomatic, slow, humanities.  
For want of public virtue to compare  
With their sick dreams, for want of purer air,  
Our feverish imaginations breed  
Unexercised by love, and only bear  
Exotic blossom or luxuriant weed,  
False to adorn, or shameless to declare,  
The lean or filthy soil on which they feed ;  
That speak our poverty of soul ; the dearth  
Of high and noble thought ; the insatiate greed  
Of wealth and power and place ; the poor disguise  
Of cruelty and sin, whose monstrous birth  
Is suffered now upon the groaning earth  
With none to avenge it and with few to heed—  
The riotous passions and unholy mirth  
Of all men summed in one tremendous deed.

And Nature too was passive ; vengeance none  
She uttered there, discovered no surprise ;  
Too blind and regular to seek or shun  
Our weal or woe, to all entreaty proof,  
From that unequal strife she held aloof,  
She wrought no omen in the orient skies ;  
But o'er that massacre the morning sun,  
From fields of blood to feed on crystal dew,

Rose daily, and was unashamed to rise,  
Upon our careless eyes.

The heaven from height to height of stainless blue  
Melted as though with love ; the harvest grew  
Golden upon the hills ; and Day, at least  
With sanguine feet begun,  
And awful eyes from that embattled East,  
Was resolute her smiling course to run  
Where courage, faith, and pity, were deceased.

And could she find no voice for your despair,  
Dumb Nature, that should move these hearts of stone ?  
In syllables of thunder rend the air  
Of stifling capitals—your desperate ills  
Write in the starry firmament, nor moan  
Your woes upon the tempest ?—move the wills  
Of princes to a noble rage for war,  
And call the nations your distress to bear—  
Nor breathe a whisper of your futile prayer  
To one rapt dreamer on the lonely hills ?  
Had she no harmony of undertone  
Set to some other sadness than his own  
Deep in the music of her woods and rills ?  
No message from her heavenward-dreaming firs,  
Acquainted much with death, and death with you,  
On his faint spirit blown—  
Not even the uneasy phantasy that stirs  
The soul presentient of a grief unknown ?—  
Though privy she with those dark ministers  
Of sleep to all your woe ; and nowise new.  
He to her mystic lore set there alone,  
Where through that spiral foliage, and through

Pale interspaces of mysterious blue,  
His soul dissolved away to mix with hers.

If from the people of that stricken shore  
Came any sound of wailing over sea,  
By our dull senses it was undivined ;  
So many a burthen of our own we bore,  
Enduring many a pitiless degree.  
And when the days of summer were declined,  
The woods of summer in their yellow leaf,  
We thought the face of nature only wore  
That visage to the temper of our grief ;  
We thought that mournful radiance only shone  
Each for his heart's expression and relief ;  
And many a sufferer that the woods resigned  
Their glory on the wind  
To suit the winter, deathlier cold and wan,  
Through which his heart, that fain would die, lived on,  
Remembering still some glory that was gone.

The visionary thus too far engrossed  
With his voluptuous grief his mood perceives  
In lovely Nature ; but some innermost  
Sad meaning incommunicable grieves  
Her spirit ; some vaster sentiment pervades  
The Autumn Isle ; for Albion's shrunken coast  
Hath forfeited the boast,  
And broods upon her glory that is lost,  
Where heaven appoints to wield an arméd host.  
In humiliation and remorse she weaves  
A crown of mystic leaves,  
Whose woe to match the lover's or the maid's

Our small imagination misconceives.  
Vainly above her woodland aisles and glades,  
Her crumbling abbeys, ivy-mantled halls,  
And immemorial shades  
Of oak and pine, the fair domains that fed  
Her mighty wars, her chivalrous crusades,  
Which the victorious infidel bereaves  
Of old renown, she wore that wreath, and shed  
That wreath in vain o'er many a careless head,  
Remembering on dark autumnal eves  
The people she deserted and their dead.  
The winds begin ; the last sere oak leaf falls,  
And rain, and snow, upon a country red  
With blood that is not hers ; the sea-bird calls  
Along a coast banked high with threatening cloud,  
To wrathful winter dedicated, loud  
With hurricanes ; the indignant sea upbraids  
That coast significant—the granite walls,  
The unstable beaches, and the hollow caves—  
Of hearts by no divine compassion bowed,  
With dreadful rumours that were stolen and spread  
Far by the tide ; and, not to be gainsaid,  
Doubtless your ghosts out of their weltering graves  
These pale and perjured shores have visited  
Some pity of your woeful plight to win ;  
Doubtless across the succour-tarrying waves  
The land of your dire persecution fled,  
And in the winter tempests wailed our sin.

Long time we lay in iron winter bound,  
Unwitting how our traitor front declared  
Our traitor heart in lands that must resound

Through all the ages with the crime we shared.  
And though all night o'er the tempestuous deep  
Those spectral visitants were eddying round  
They did not vex our sleep.  
And wept all night, though never heard to weep,  
Our shame, and mingled darkly in the storm  
That shed our laurels, spirits far renowned  
Out of the warlike past; each awful form  
Of warrior, monarch, bard, and prophet crowned  
With leaves that are, whatever winters roll  
Above their graves, unwithered; for the soul  
Aspires most bravely where the blood runs warm  
From battle; with winged words Maeonides  
Consents, whilst he who fought at Marathon,  
And those less warlike bards, of classic fame  
Therefore less fortunate, the truth proclaim.  
And gazed out of the winter heaven profound  
A patriot's eyes with quenchless fire that shone,  
And dark prognostications, ill at ease;  
The immortal voice that strove with Macedon  
Appeals once more—nor that heart-stirring sound  
Was all in vain—to ignominious Greece;  
Whilst for her loss of wide dominion  
Rome's stalwart warriors rose up to blame  
The fatal arts and luxuries of peace.  
And scarred yet with many a glorious wound,  
Their testimony high to bear with these,  
Those knights who sought the East in arms and came,  
Though unvictorious, home vast piles to found,  
And towers of learning, the illustrious name  
Recite of him who first our stammering speech  
In sweet melodious numbers taught to run;

And his of Italy, who still doth teach  
The world a music ever new begun.  
And—more importunate for vengeance none—  
That city of the sea-girt palaces  
Lepanto urged, with her inveterate flame  
Of hate to arm the mistress of the seas.  
Next that Plantagenet, who long ago  
Of his French Katherine desired a son  
To beard the Turk, extols the royal game  
Of war and venturous Agincourt to shame  
Our cold deliberation and the breach  
Of treaties thrice performed. And he who sung  
That warrior king, and saw our navies reach  
Through the bright west a virgin world, aglow  
With new desire, and saw them overthrow  
Their rival too presumptuous, first became  
With human things perplexed, and could not frame  
A language for his woe,  
That such a race should ever speak the tongue  
That Shakespeare spake with men who did not know  
Fear of a mortal foe.  
That poet next, the awful Puritan,  
In classic numbers called upon the Lord  
To avenge his slaughtered saints ; and to and fro  
Across the sea a brood of giants poured  
Remonstrative—the bards and heroes sprung  
From that world struggle with the tyrant who  
Himself was reared in war ;— a mighty chord  
They struck upon the storm : what men can do,  
And how thereby a nation's lyre is strung,  
Trafalgar arguing and Waterloo.  
And the tempestuous sea took up the word

Which knows what men can dare, and how they can,  
When refuge none the riven planks afford,  
Their indifferent souls above the deep suspend,  
Self-centred, luminous, meditative, hung  
Like stars in heaven to see the approaching end.  
In war the soul of nations, as of man  
In desperate straits, brought face to face with death,  
Is disembodied, self-collected, stung  
To moods divine, and starlike in the van  
Of action sits contemplative ; the breath  
Of life from each heroic deed she draws ;  
She glows to hear the tumult of applause ;  
And crowns the race with an immortal wreath  
Of Pericles or of Elizabeth.  
War do not seek : but if a noble cause  
Be offered let the scourge of war descend ;  
Let men be ruined ; let their hearts be wrung  
With sorrow for their lovely dead ;—thus saith  
The Muse, and thus the choral edict ran  
Commending war, in which with one accord  
Poets and warriors dead their voices blend  
With His, the Voice divine, who came to send  
Not peace unto the nations but a sword.

Spring comes at last ; that winter surge might fret  
The rocks, and reach out of the midnight vast  
White hands to threaten all the guilty shore ;  
But man's iniquity hath never set  
A term to spring that she should come no more.  
Reluctantly that funeral robe she wore  
The earth puts off at last  
For veils of tender green ; but not before

We knew our guilt—your woe—could she forget ;  
Nay, with her future rooted in her past,  
Sadness pervades her flowering woodlands yet.  
And even here are many souls that mourn,  
Though seeing this beauty here of bud and leaf  
We may assuage the tyranny of grief  
And salve the memories of old regret.  
But on your hills forlorn  
How should there come the untainted April morn  
With sweetness from their verdurous thickets borne ?  
Of rape and murder and the midnight thief  
They reek to heaven ; and if the purer breath  
Even of spring, were not infected too  
What but your graves should her fresh flowers adorn ?  
For you who still remain, distressed and worn  
By fear, cold, hunger ; pining for relief  
That never comes ; the bitterness of death  
Tasting so many times—what should you do  
With flowers before you die ? They only woo  
The soul that in itself has some reserves  
Of strength or consolation ; they require  
Peace ere they come with delicate scent and hue,  
Like oil and wine, upon the very nerves  
Of virtue, meditation, and desire.  
But how should you, poor sufferers, construe  
These hints of lovely Nature ? at your feet  
The very flowers ashamed must all retire  
Soft eyes from your distress ; and no more you  
With their divine intelligence to greet  
Your hills are kindled in the morning blue,  
Your mountain air is vigorous and sweet.

Weep not that she is fallen now so low—  
Armenia—she, if anything she hears,  
On earth, can spare the insult of our tears.  
Our wrathful incredulity was slow  
To own, as futile to avenge her woe,  
And still our grief is idle ; but the years  
Of that destruction into which she fell  
Must hold us guiltiest of all our peers ;  
And still from many a foetid dungeon cell  
Is darkly rumoured that which not to know  
Were bliss, though chequered by our deadliest fears ;  
No fables that have been conceived of Hell  
Could surfeit more our disinclinéd ears.

## EPILEGOMENA.

THE Riddle of the World shalt thou refuse  
To hear—the arraigned virtue to contest ?—  
My ear the adventurous Muse  
Thus to her great perennial theme addressed ;  
And thine whom ever that large interest  
From things particular, however small,  
At once compels to lose  
Thy soul in contemplations general :—  
Thou, for whomever the ethereal hues  
Of morning with a guileless charm invest  
The accuséd earth, in whom the orient skies  
Thy faith restore, thy judgments readvise—  
The Riddle of the World shalt thou refuse  
To hear, to ponder and resolve, that lies  
In this dark page so terribly expressed ?  
Be not faint-hearted ; do not think to rest  
So soon thy tiréd wings : some divine use  
Pain surely has ; by each in his own breast  
The trial is suffered and the truth confessed.  
This we believe : and if a single one  
Must suffer anywhere beneath the sun  
Thousands as well may suffer ; if at all,  
Little or much—the pathos unaware  
That may be read into the wistful eyes  
Of some fair child—the mortal agonies  
Of those strong men—what matters to the abstruse  
Intelligence ? Let not the ingenuous quest

Of truth transforméd be to pale despair  
Like his, the all-knowing bard, skilled in the laws  
Of nature, yet too pitiful withal,  
Who, meditating long upon the fall  
Of Lisbon, lost his God ; or his, the mild  
And great philosopher, who yet, because  
Of those famed reptiles, horribly destroyed  
As well by beasts as men, the shuddering void  
Of unbelief crossed as a little child  
The dark—O, suffer not such blind despair,  
Born of this horror of insatiate Death,  
On thy aspiring wings to give thee pause  
And dash thee headlong from the upper air  
Of truth, my habitation undefiled,  
My element. But that the world is fair  
Believe—believe, though darkling underneath  
Those open gates of heaven there gape the jaws  
Of hell—yea, though to each mysterious end  
Its scythéd wheels so cruelly ascend,  
Though its victorious arms are bathed in blood,  
The great soul of the World is fair and good.  
The great soul of the universe, the breath  
Of nature, the informing will, the cause  
Of all that shall be, is, or ever was,  
Judge as a friend, judged only by the best  
He is or does, not by those actions base,  
Or cruel, or vain, that contradict the grace  
Of thought and purpose written in his face.  
Judge at high noon ; judge in the sunset hour ;  
Nor in the sombre night thy faith deny ;  
But on the ulterior truth and equity  
Of that great power inscrutable depend

As on the love and wisdom of a friend.  
Beneficent and terrible, that Power  
Who rules the sunset and creates the flower,  
Inspires the bird with song, and paints on high  
That many coloured bow across the sky ;  
Who makes the wind a voice, the stars a goal,  
To the unrestful and aspiring soul  
Of man, his dreadful counterpart, a strain  
Contrives the while of undercurrent pain,  
A mystery of woe—yea, though he wreathes  
The harp with flowers—that grave Musician draws  
From every trembling string ; by his decree  
Race preys on tortured race ; the weak must die  
To serve the strong ; and thus a monstrous brood  
Of creatures he begets to seek their food,  
The snake with poisonous fangs, the shark with teeth,  
The tiger arms with cruel teeth and claws,  
To war below ; the falcon from above  
With taloned heels to strike the alarméd dove ;  
The fierce barbarian to the ancient feud  
With blind hereditary lusts endued—  
Yea, with dire appetites akin to love  
The flesh to prosper and the soul to prove,  
The purposes of heaven and earth to blend,  
He arméd man, the angel and the fiend ;—  
And nature against man, and man to seek  
His bread in that rough market where the weak  
Go to the wall, with instruments as rude,  
The passions and the elements ; virtues  
Primeval, vices reputable, send  
Man to contend with man ; the storm winds rend  
His sails, and like a mist upon the flood

He disappears ; by pestilence and war  
He perishes ; towards the hungry pole,  
As moths about a flame, his chiefs contend  
Brave crews to venture, precious lives to spend ;  
And now against the Turk what scions remain  
Of Christian faith or warlike chivalry  
Must ache to die ; even to him who fears  
Death death must come at last ; the race  
Must perish ; the bereavéd earth shall roll  
For ages through the azure fields of space  
Disconsolate, insensate, unpossessed ;  
Her lord, the sun, his fire shall cool and wane.  
All things their Maker doth unmake and mar  
In Godlike scorn of each particular  
Till thou mayst only close thy wings to set  
Thy feet on that high star  
Where of their types and processes he rears  
The monuments in heaven, beneath thee far  
Things what they seem, deposed without regret,  
Above thee and about thee what they are.  
Thence the great earth invisible to thy  
Frail sense, or thence a point of light appears,  
Or thence behind its time ten thousand years,  
In its primeval loveliness, and yet  
So soon to die, so easy to forget.  
Thence are the heavens before thee as a scroll  
Spread out, and some deep meaning in the whole  
Is all divulged ; that music of the spheres  
Which is eternal—yea, though there be none  
To hear it—which, if any mortal hears,  
The discords of that awful harmony  
Vex not his charméd ears.

Wouldst thou all things created should exist  
For ever whilst in bright Orion glows,  
Dear to the prophet's heart, that fiery mist  
Of worlds unborn ? wouldst thou the wondrous throes  
Of birth and death—wouldst thou the sense of tears  
In human things remit ?—On some high mood  
Just to be born the spectacle to see,  
And to resolve in counsel with thy peers,  
Were immortality enough for thee.

Pain without death, death without pain—these own  
Our argument—a first rude stepping stone  
One to ascend the intellectual throne  
From which the other is despised ; these twain  
Unite—red death by fire and sword—to make  
The old, the eternal question heard again ;  
This of the other some fresh sting to take,  
Some fruit to render vain.—Not to assume  
That upon which the oracles are dumb,  
Uncertain, fabulous, or disagreed,  
A life beyond the tomb ;—  
Not to assume in thy adventurous creed  
More than the least sufficient—aught that may  
Ever become ev'n as a broken reed  
To mortals yet unborn ;—Oh, for the sake  
Of mortals born to die, and hearts to break  
With sheer compassion, thou from what is plain  
To all—that virtue cannot be in vain—  
That God exists—do thou make manifest  
Good in this ill ; once more essay to bend  
This bow beyond their strength ; Ulysses be  
Perhaps to some forlorn Penelope,  
Some faith that hangs perplexed upon the loom

Of night and day, where solitary night  
Undoes the work of day; once more intend  
Thy soul to pierce this mystery—indeed  
A dreadful gloom, but that must needs be bright  
Which throws the shadow, intercepts the light.

—Often, when we out of the evening gloom  
Of some deep vale on to a sunlit height  
Have issued, thence according to our wont  
To watch whilst universal Nature dwells  
In joy, and love, and wonderful delight  
O'er the great pageant—watch the bloom that grows  
On earth of shadowy green and gold, the bloom  
In heaven of violet, daffodil, and rose—  
Like faith a gorgeous fabric on the loom  
Of night and day perplexed—the sun ere he  
Descended made us clear cut parables  
Of night; for there, like giants at a hunt,  
Turned the same way to mark his lair, there stood  
Gray crags and grassy knolls, with blushing heath  
Crowned, or with high and leafy citadels,  
To catch the sun, and golden in the front  
Of their long shadows on the purple fells.  
Thus are the hemispheres of night and day  
Each by the other bounded every way,  
And this ethereal cone of darkness shod  
With light, as crowned with splendours infinite.  
Thus every shadow of disease or vice,  
Sorrow or death, a front of paradise,  
Though from its own dark tenement unguessed,  
Bears for a season to the flaming west.  
And when, obedient to the level ray,  
The shadows lengthen giant souls, that else

Were unobserved rise up to seek for God.  
Like mountains to the giddy edge they rise,  
That traversed all day long the motley disc  
Of earth unmarked, a moment opposite  
The sun to stand and disappear. Each crest  
Of purple rock, each rosy obelisk,  
Tremendous crater, sharp cut precipice,  
Flushed with the sunset, mounts in turn to write  
His character in heaven transforméd quite—  
To change the mind of God—yea, to impose  
His image on the stars before he goes  
Into the dark, into the great unknown.  
The earth their footstool is, the stars their crown—  
Stars in that clear celestial ether thrice  
Distinct and glorious, jewels without price,  
Daggers and swords and crosses, shooting fires  
And palpitating lustres—hopes, desires,  
Renunciations—flames of sacrifice  
And stars of love.—One with the woof and warp  
Of heaven we are ; a Spirit that is one  
In all that's suffered, or enjoyed, or done,  
The fabric weaves, the harmony inspires.  
Through short-lived instruments of various tone  
The music breathes, the Spirit ebbs and flows,  
And breaks the tortured frames and snaps the wires.  
But of Himself and to Himself alone  
Justice the instant Deity requires ;  
And finds in that wild music and is gone,  
A strain now tremulous with joy, now sharp  
And loud, a wailing of tempestuous woes,  
Ev'n as the wind from an *Æolian* harp,  
Whither is none that knows.

## THE WARRIOR HERO.

1895.

WHERE is the warrior hero in our land  
Whom this dire crisis, lovely as a bride,  
Comes to rejoice ; comes grateful to his pride,  
Finding the heart that loves to understand  
And swift resources ready to his hand  
Of action ; who prevails the adverse tide  
Of circumstance triumphantly to ride,  
The man who comes, and sees, and take command ?

Let him arise, and like the morning sun  
Disperse these vapours of inglorious fear,  
Who'd rather his compatriots one by one  
Should perish to a man than buy too dear  
Peace with dishonour, perjured lives that none,  
Whilst Islam stands, can cherish or revere.

## DEGENERATION.

THE swords were sheathed, the purple blazon furled,  
    Of chivalry, the minstrels passed away,  
Whilst maidens were dishonoured day by day  
And martyrs slain by fire and sword, or hurled  
From rocky height and steep ; the lips were curled  
    Of Islam in contempt, whilst round him lay  
    And watched that violence they feared to stay  
The armaments and navies of the world.

Now, if our dead might ere repeat a stroke,  
    Should from their scabbards leap those angry blades  
    That wrought so bravely in our old crusades ;  
If ever from the tomb they even spoke  
    This were sufficient the tremendous shades  
Of Milton, Wordsworth, Byron, to evoke.

## ANOTHER ENGLAND.

A NOTHER England in my dream I knew ;  
Like this of ours dominion wide she bore,  
Her sceptre and her arms from shore to shore  
Of continent and ocean ; but to do  
Against all odds the tasks that empire threw  
Upon her was her aim ; and thus she wore  
A front the guilty nations cowered before  
And triumphed always with the just and true.

But see her now ! in solemn treaty sworn  
The champion of a cause her heart alone,  
If not a common faith, should make her own,  
This perjured name become ; for which the scorn  
She hath procured by mortals yet unborn  
Shall justly be preserved and handed down.

## THE WRATH OF HEAVEN.

THE wrath of heaven may like our own be slow  
But, surer than our own, shall come though late  
The Moslem tyrant to precipitate  
From his abuséd seat ; to overthrow  
That dynasty of Hell ; and we, who know  
Ourselves the instrument, yet idly wait,  
Shall in the general ruin participate,  
And that obstructed vengeance undergo.

For those whom heaven her deputy hath made  
Must hold themselves erected more, a tower  
Of Justice, Truth and Virtue unafraid.  
Once be they disconcerted, from that hour  
Their doom shall be assured ; their sceptred power  
Be withered from their hands, their strength dismayed.

## JONAH.

THOUGH sorrow, fear, and shame for thee immerse  
My soul, until I wish my pen a sword,  
And that slow coming vengeance of the Lord  
With thy too well deserved woe rehearse,  
My country dear!—what profits this poor verse,  
When he to thy dark capital, whose word  
Was beauty, virtue, love, must now afford  
This shade prophetic of a monstrous curse.

Step from thy canvas, thou stupendous Shade!  
As once to Nineveh thy voice be sent,  
"Yet forty days"; O, make our hearts afraid;  
Our sins chastize; our impious thoughts prevent;  
In dust and ashes we may yet persuade  
The Lord of his great mercy to repent.

## THE RIGHTEOUS TEN.

THE hour of help gone by, I dropped my pen,  
Expecting fire from heaven ; not once nor twice  
I sought fresh signs and images of vice ;  
And I who thought to find the world a den  
Of thieves and liars, fell on valiant men,  
Sweet and true women, jewels without price,  
And not a scape-goat for the sacrifice,  
But everywhere I met the righteous ten.

Merciful God ! who knowest the human soul  
What riddle's here ? what poison at the root  
Of lives so fair can yield such bitter fruit ?—  
Over the form and action of the whole  
Have these, the beauteous members, no control ?—  
Be Thou our dreadful Judge ; let us be mute.

## THE CURSE.

I THOUGHT the curse repealed ; I looked again ;  
Fair leaves the tree displayed, but meagre fruit,  
And a small worm in every tender shoot  
Preyed greedily, and made her buds in vain.  
The curse had fallen ; and the curse was plain  
In arts and letters cankered at the root  
By vile self-love ; in lives that wore the suit  
Of virtue not without an eye to gain.

Knowledge that men forget to consecrate  
In noble use ; the power that men employ  
To selfish ends of avarice, lust, and hate ;  
The tools of war become an idle toy,  
Corrupt, that should have edified the state  
As means of love and instruments of joy.

## SEA MEMORIES.

HERE in these old sea-gazing haunts the weight  
    Of thought, the tyrannies of hope and fear,  
        To memories sweet give place, the toils of Fate  
    To memories sweet give place, and disappear :—  
        How in the golden days of childhood here  
Morning and evening thus I loved to roam,  
    And watch the dense blue slumberous ocean rear  
Those lines of league-long rollers, wreathed in foam,  
Up the steep barriers of its rock-bound home.

Here the old miracles are practised still ;  
    In crucibles of heaven the day is fast  
Resolved ; the ethereal hues of sunset fill  
    The deep, the pure, the illimitable vast.  
    Here all my heart is softened with the past,  
And things that were become as things that are,  
    And fair as those which shall be at the last ;  
Quit of the tedious world I am, yea, far  
Remote and alien as the evening star.

On thése red-crumbling but luxuriant heights  
    In childhood thus I often paused to see  
The long coast slumbering in the western lights  
    And dreamed that 'neath those setting suns might be  
        A fairy land girt by a fairy sea.  
That fairy world I found ; the very air  
    Of paradise it breathed—how mild and free  
The summer nights, and how beyond compare  
    The dawns were fragrant and the days were fair !

How often where that charméd land doth rest,  
Girt by its charméd ocean many a mile,  
Have I sailed deep into the purple west  
And dropped along the coast from isle to isle  
With full drawn sails ; or drifted in the smile  
Of dead-calm ocean noondays ; or assayed  
The emboweréd river mouths, a little while  
Mooring my light white-wingéd craft, home-made,  
'Neath wooded shores of cool voluptuous shade,

Where as she lay the dark green water laughed  
And dimpled round her in the shadowy cove ;  
Home-made she was, the light white-wingéd craft ;  
The planks I cut, the bolts and nails I drove,  
Wild wind and wave ere now had sought to prove ;  
My home, my bed she was ; from the great deep  
My lenten fare she furnished ; free to rove  
Ev'n as I would she made me, free to keep  
What hours I would, and when I would to sleep.

I wandered on with joy for ever new  
In seeking still some ever lovelier place ;  
The very wind rippled the dancing blue  
And my white sails wrought into curves that trace—  
Ev'n as the lines upon a human face  
Express the soul within—the purpose fair  
Of Nature, yearning always to embrace  
Beauty and joy—ev'n to conceive and bear  
Children of beauty to the formless air.

And when the shining world was all asleep  
In the hushed loveliness of summer nights ;  
When the full moon was hung above the deep

Intensely still in star-forsaken heights ;  
And in the coast succeeding harbour lights  
Would open for a little and be gone ;  
Moving alone through such tranced summer nights  
Over the luminous sea my sails held on  
Till in the dawn the moon grew pale and wan.

Or, when the wind was high, the night was dark,  
And then the tardy day desiréd most,  
On the wild waste my solitary bark  
The streaky dawn discovered like a ghost,  
And lying heaped with cloud the angry coast :—  
And memories many a fair or dreadful one  
The mariner's admiring soul may boast,  
But, now most dreadful, now the loveliest, none  
To match the sea beneath a rising sun.

And I have spent upon the lone sand dune  
The autumn night ; across the gusty sky  
The driving clouds revealed or hid the moon,  
And not another human soul was by ;  
Only from where the ebbing tide left dry  
The river flats there came upon the wind  
The curlew's moving and mysterious cry,  
And in that plaintive music more defined  
Some superstitious spectre of the mind.

(O, winged sorrow ! melancholy bird !  
Some poet's wandering ghost thou surely art,  
Unseen by ignorant eyes ; remotely heard  
Over the sea at night ; become a part  
Of nature and the grief that broke thy heart.

Familiar as a ghost to come and go  
'Twixt nature and the spirit-world thou art,  
With secret consolation, if to know,  
Or to have known, the worst can heal thy woe.)

I slept ; and waking in the very place  
Where Nature so forbidding seemed before,  
Wondered how easily another face  
She wears, and all the dark mysterious shore  
Is changed ; and there the autumn twilight hoar,  
Through a cold fog o'er hill and river drawn,  
I watched ; and still it brightened more and more  
Till the pale moon sank o'er the wooded lawn,  
And earth and sea grew silver with the dawn.

The winds had fallen, and the curlew gone ;  
Those bare mud flats up to the verdurous brim  
The spring-tide filled ; in its smooth bosom shone  
The steel blue heaven ; the gulls that wheel or swim  
Thereon are wrought—the ships, tall masted, trim,  
Rigged—all as if in silver filigree ;  
Till presently behold the scarlet rim  
Of the great sun, the power and life to be  
Of that cold world, spring from the eastern sea !

—O, that my sails were once again unfurled  
Upon the salt sea winds that I might flee  
Far from the work and turmoil of the world,  
Far o'er the life and languor of the sea !  
O, that my white sails and myself might be  
There where my dreaming spirit doth abide ;  
There where my keel, swift as my will and free,

Might drive, and fall, and musically slide  
In troughs of foam over the heaving tide !

O, once again for hours of gracious ease  
On the blue sea to watch the shining day,  
Subject no more to these sharp tyrannies  
Of earth that wear the living soul away :  
Having boon Nature only to obey ;  
No love, no vain ambition, no vile greed  
Of wealth, no idle hope nor blank dismay  
In these wild projects, once achieved that breed  
Some new desire, some more imperious need.

—If love, such love as sailors learn to use  
On the wide sea ; love that can do no wrong,  
But on its own sweet dreams doth feed and muse  
With lips that move in sad perpetual song ;  
Love purified by separations long  
Of selfish care and dull satiety ;  
Love that not only tender is but strong,  
And in the bitterness of each “ goodbye ”  
Hath learnt the dreadful secret, How to die.

—The curlew whistles, and the night comes down ;  
And far the comfortable homes appear  
That beckon kindly from the lighted town,  
And not another human soul is near ;  
But through my limbs a cold delicious fear  
Begins to steal, and from eternity  
Great Nature asks the soul, “ What dost thou here ? ”  
“ Canst thou endure my naked face to see  
“ And learn, The world was never made for thee ? ”

## ANIMA MUNDI.

THE Soul that labours blindly to escape  
From the dark bonds of Matter, issuing through  
With power in that perpetual birth to shape  
All nature to the beautiful anew;

The Soul that strove in flower and bird and beast  
Since out of chaos first the world began,  
From that long travail found herself released,  
To finer issues in the Soul of Man.

She knew herself the soul of all she saw;  
Through heaven and earth diffused, from pole to pole,  
The Beautiful in nature and the Law  
Were forms and motions of the human soul,  
Wherein she ranged at will—wherein she grew  
Familiar with herself, the Pure, the True.

## MARTYRS.

**L**OVERS, though dear to Nature's heart, who bear  
A mortal pain so often at their own;  
Poets, women, saints—their cruel illusions fair,  
As she requires, conceived or overthrown;—

By passion, creed, imagination fond,  
Driven every way to ill-endured extremes;  
Enthusiasts sweet, prone to her subtle wand,  
Men serve the deep enchantress in their dreams.

Darkly consulting Nature!—Could she trust  
A share of larger vision to her child,  
Then might his unafflicted will be just,  
His warring inclinations reconciled,

And her converging purposes require  
Martyrs no more to faith nor blind desire.

## NIRVANA.

**T**O that high heaven, O could my soul expire,  
Where not the loveliest dreams of earth remain,  
In contemplation to escape desire,  
And disappoint the ministers of pain ;

I know, scorning at once thy glorious veil  
Of flesh, a spirit of immortal light,  
That thou, pale temptress of my peace, would'st sail  
Above me still, invading every height

Of thought or vision ere my soul possessed  
Her stern advantage, thinking to be free ;  
For I that heaven where thou art not my quest  
Can only meditate in terms of thee—

A heaven that's all, like mountains in the sun,  
Afire with thee when I have thought thee gone.

## MISGIVINGS.

WHEN I of some too passionate desire  
    Become the prey; or melt away and flow  
Like water uncontained before some dire  
Result, some dark presentiment, of woe;

Or, if the Gods their sumptuous gifts increase,  
    Am fearful still, incredulous of joy,  
I know within my soul the eternal peace  
    She craves is hers to make or to destroy;

That this unrest not heaven inflicts but I,  
    Too curious where earth is broad and sweet  
To meddle with the secrets of the sky,  
    Or choose the road beneath my inconstant feet;

For where the road's most steep and high the air  
Of heaven is pure, of earth the prospect fair.

## TO A FAIR ABSTRACTION.

O H, is it to avenge some idle tone  
    Of my rash love that had no right to be,  
Or to confess a weakness of thy own,  
That thou hast crossed the illimitable sea  
  
To vex my sleep?—'tis not in sport the fire  
    Of days gone by thou'dst kindle in my breast ;  
Heaven grant 'twas not thy own unformed desire  
    In the deep night that would not let thee rest.  
  
With what soft incense, what rude sacrifice,  
    Of love should I appease thy glorious shade,  
Who love yet love thee not ? by what device  
    Enjoy the friend and exorcise the maid ;  
  
Who than a simple friend may not profess  
    To love thee more, and cannot love thee less ?

## CYNTHIA.

LONG nights in heaven the winter moon I saw,  
And, seeing her, I more desiréd thee ;  
So strange a power she hath to move and draw  
My soul, unresting as the tidal sea.

And now from heaven the winter moon hath gone,  
And in the early twilight thou art here ;  
May in mid-winter ; moon where moon was none ;  
In the December morning, dark and drear,

A light upon wet field and purple wood,  
A fragrance in the misty air—all day  
Before my dreaming eyes thy spirit stood  
In mortal loveliness, and passed away

At night to rule in heaven again, where soon  
I saw with strange desire the orbing moon.

## LOVE.

O LOVE, for whom the tedious days with fear,  
Desire, and hope, are terrible ; for whom  
So cruel the separating gulfs appear  
Of distance, auguring the loveless tomb ;

Who art, though from eternity a guest,  
So much the vassal here of Time and Chance ;  
Whose mighty dreams, that will not let thee rest,  
Such petty cares forbid thee to advance ;

Much thwarted Tyrant ! this our bondage thou,  
To make us free, dost bitterly increase ;  
And ere thou set the laurel on our brow  
Of victory and everlasting peace,

Wouldst show us how faith, wisdom, peace, might be  
Unprofitable, easy, but for thee.

## A FLOWER OF THE AGES.

WITH what mysterious art thy flower-like face,  
Through what long centuries the joy, the care,  
Of all the passionate founders of the race,  
Did Love thy mystic elements prepare ?

Of such tumultuous fires as now they light  
Thy sweet proportions reminiscent seem ;  
The convolutions of an incense white,  
Thy face the wistful glory of a dream,

Which with desire, and joy, and pains untold,  
The love-learned generations brought to birth,  
Of their aspiring soul the purest mould  
Breathed visibly upon the plastic earth,

That Love, through these admiring eyes, might see  
His dream fulfilled, nay, glorified in thee.

## TO MY NEPHEW CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER, first of those thy grandsire now  
In heaven awaits to justify his seed  
Now to a second issue come, be thou  
His to the death, be his in thought and deed.

Doubly descended from the gentle race  
Of those who keep the spirit pure and whole,  
Thy father's and thy mother's child, a grace  
Twofold should light upon thy infant soul

To grant my prayer. Like her who gave thee birth  
Be pure and true and sweetly serious be ;  
Be as thy father full of kindly mirth,  
Be strong, be wise, be temperate as he.

Of thy rich seed, O, yield the hungry bread  
Who seek in thee the living—and the Dead !

## TO MARGARET.

DEAR, be not sad because the world is cold  
To this first bloom of thy adventurous art,  
Blind to these lovely parables that hold  
Each some ethereal doctrine of thy heart.

The March winds thus that nip the weaker shoots  
Make room thereby for the luxuriant spring ;  
Bow to the wintry blast, but strike thy roots  
Deeper for that unkindly buffetting.

Let thine art grow as those sweet wild-flowers still,  
That grow unseen, careless of praise or blame,  
Yet famous have become against their will,  
A language rich and beautiful, that name

Tracts of the earth and seasons of the year,  
Emblems of love, and things to children dear.

## TO MY WIFE.

D AUGHTER, my wife, of some patrician house,  
When I those large and soft blue eyes behold,  
Those sweetly archéd, finely pencilled brows,  
That hair, thy crown, of immaterial gold—

Thou, robed in blue, against the firelit wall  
On thy low couch reclined; I inwardly  
Fostering my half-formed thought, and thou the small  
Dread vehicle of better thoughts to be—

When from my deep but ineffectual dream  
I raise my thoughts to thee, I know that thou  
Hast joined thy strength with mine in that pure stream  
Of life my strainéd purpose to endow

With power in some new race, in some fresh page  
All my perplexéd thoughts to disengage.

## SPRING.

**I**N those blue eyes a softer blue, a clear  
    Unclouded heaven—in heaven a softer blue—  
Speaks of that blissful season of the year  
    When all created things their kinds renew.

Spring comes apace, and thou canst bear to look  
    Now on her generous beauty; thee no more  
The budding flowers, the nesting birds rebuke;  
    A sweet confederate in their mystic lore

They claim thee now—a member and a part  
    Of nature;—no more alien and alone  
At the great festival thy woman's heart  
    Shall ache to see an offspring not thy own.

Of this fair spring thou mayst without alloy  
Share the rich life, the universal joy.

## TO MY DAUGHTER BEATRICE.

WHAT glorious omens do attend thy birth,  
Fair child!—the fruit trees like a white sea foam  
Brake into flower with thee; the genial earth  
Made haste with summer to adorn thy home.

If by this golden earnest of his prime  
Summer be judged—the harvest by the flower—  
Thou in the vaward of a beauteous time  
Art surely come.—In this auspicious hour

Just thirty years ago by thy grandsire  
The tie was formed, the precious seed was sown,  
Of which heaven grant in thee to his desire  
The fruit be seen, the virtue handed down;

Ev'n as in that sweet crescent of the new  
The old moon glows.—O, prove the omens true!

## TO MURIEL.

WHAT shall I wish thee?—now the mystic tale,  
Thrice seven sweet summers, thou hast made  
complete,

And not a friend with some good wish can fail  
To lay his simple offering at thy feet.

Let others wish thee joy and length of years,  
Wealth, friends, the great felicities of love;  
Sweets that do often prove the cause of tears,  
Fair things that time shall spoil or death remove.

But I a thing more glorious wish thee now  
Which nothing but thyself hath power to harm;  
I wish thee thy sweet self; be only thou  
True to thyself of yesterday; the charm

Of womanhood to wear, the power to win,  
O, keep inviolate the Child within!

## THE STRAITS.

**O**N that dim shore the living day below  
    A long desired, a Godlike stranger waits ;  
    And thou a brief and perilous voyage must go  
    To fetch him safe across the shadowy straits

Which at the portals of the world defer  
    All access hither with tempestuous night ;  
Yea, though a saviour of the world he were,  
    A creature of our dreams, a child of light.

The adventure great, but great the guerdon is ;  
    And thou hast deep reserves on which to draw ;  
Love for the high, the sweet philosophies,  
    Faith in the justice of eternal law,

To fortify thy soul ere thou embark  
    On thy dread voyage through Chaos and the Dark.

## THE PILGRIM'S RETURN.

THE Soul returns. O, thrice beloved and sweet,  
Thy direful pilgrimage was not in vain,  
Driven like a wild bird to what dim retreat,  
What shadowy exile, on the wings of pain !

There on the borders of the vast abyss  
Blindly she hovers like a frightened dove ;  
Nothing she knows, and nothing feels, save this ;  
The means are righteous for the end is love.

Tossed blindly there, like some ill-fated bark  
Struck by a cyclone of the Indian seas,  
Through those dread hours of tempest and the dark  
She feels a God whose wondrous purposes

Rule the vexed ocean, secretly inform  
The womb of night, the vortex of the storm.

## THE QUEEN.

NOT to adorn with some unrivalled grace  
Of wit or beauty her imperial throne,  
But to exalt the virtue of the race  
She ruled,—to make her peoples thoughts her own  
  
Though wiser than we knew ; our ways of life  
Her own, but purer than before ; to be  
Such that the stature of the perfect wife  
And mother in the Queen we learned to see—  
  
This was her glory. Sciences and arts—  
The extent and period of her power—these shed  
A glamour on the crown ; but most our hearts  
Mourned for the woman when the queen was dead.  
  
A Queen so loved, a woman virtuous more,  
So vast an empire never mourned before.

## ANIMA VERIS.

THE heart's desire to pass the sealéd lips  
Is fain as a caged bird to fly;  
For Spring is breaking through the bare tree-tips  
With tufts of buds against the silver sky.

It is the spring, and on all sides I hear  
The love-notes of the nesting birds;  
And undertones of music in my ear  
That wait, but wait in vain, for wingéd words.

Some depth there is that may not be employed  
Of speechless thought and vain desire;  
The strains that draw from that mysterious void  
Were never caught upon an earthly lyre.

Through the green woods and on the odorous wind  
They steal, as anciently they stole;  
Notes of a harmony still undivined,  
But always half familiar to the soul;

From where the dreaming spirit doth abide  
Of music at the heart of things;  
And darkly moves that undercurrent tide,  
The source of fair and never failing springs—

That tide that breaks along the world in flower,  
And in the woods is bursting through,  
From bud to leaf unsheathing hour by hour  
Their tender foliage to the April blue.

We know not God, except that He is Love;  
Nor Life, except that it is His;  
In spring God whispers from the heaven above,  
He breathes and moves in everything that is.

And in these moments of eternal worth  
Thou haply shalt become divine  
Of something kindred in the things of earth  
Unto the things of spirit that are thine.

The purple tree tops melt in silver haze ;  
A fruitful silence broods over the land ;  
And doth some tenderness of bygone days  
Not teach at least thy heart to understand ?

## A NIGHT ON THE DART.

’TWAS midnight on the ebb ; and soon  
Above a lustrous crest  
Of wooded hills the pale half moon  
Was falling in the west.

On each bright spar and glancing oar  
The moonlight glitters white and hoar,  
And broods on each mysterious shore,  
Of the wide world at rest.

The moon behind a bank of cloud  
Has set, and gone her light ;  
Short claps of thunder, sharp and loud,  
Are rattling on the right ;  
And ever indistinctlier loom  
Through the increasing depths of gloom  
Those banks that shut us in a tomb  
Of black and ghastly night.

Behold ! how the thick veil at last  
Is riven far and wide,  
And those high river banks aghast  
Reveals on either side.  
A seed of fire in the dun air  
Dilates ; a world embracing glare  
Dazzles, and dies, and leaves us there  
In darkness on the tide.

And—we stiff-stricken to the core  
By that pervading light—  
A long reverberating roar  
Dumbounds the listening night.

## A NIGHT ON THE DART.

As when through Alpine vales the shock  
Is heard of some far-falling rock,  
And echoing precipices mock  
    The crash from height to height.

And then with palpitating shapes  
    The dreadful night became  
Alive—distinct with shores and capes,  
    But never twice the same.—  
And rocks and trees leapt out among  
The trembling shadows that they flung,  
As all about them flashed and hung  
    Those blinding shafts of flame.

It passed ; the storm with lessening peals  
    Went muttering o'er the wold ;  
But wonders more the night reveals  
    And wondering eyes behold.  
For fiercely from the starless train  
Of storm clouds hissed hard rods of rain,  
And the dark water lashed again  
    To breadths of burnished gold.

The stream—whose gods with heaven conspire  
    To keep the pageant bright—  
With leaping rings and sprays of fire  
    Is splendid in the night  
It seems the immortals cannot tire,  
    But each his opposite  
And to a measure wild and sweet  
The powers of storm and darkness meet  
Unseen, whose thousand dancing feet  
    Are shodden all with light.

## THE MAIDEN SACRIFICE.

**S**O that ill-omened King put on the yoke  
    Of brief necessity ; a treacherous wind,  
    His much wrought soul, too fatally inclined,  
Set from the cruel North ; dread words he spoke

Of his adventurous thought, so rashly fired  
    By those dark counsels—that a daughter's life  
    To speed the war that should avenge a wife  
The Virgin Goddess bitterly required ;

A sacrifice to speed his fleet that lay  
    Wind-bound at Aulis.—He must undergo  
    Those words unblest and fraught with future woe—  
Such words bear hard on mortals ;—he must slay

His child ; her prayers, her cries upon the name  
    Of " Father," and her tender years untaught  
    The blissful rites of love, they set at naught,  
Those chiefs, blood-thirsty judges, much to blame.

They steeled their hearts for all that she was young  
    And fair exceedingly ; her maiden zone  
    Fouly undid—the greater to atone  
The lesser crime—whilst other hymns were sung

Than those of marriage ; then—her sweet drawn breath  
    Confined and muffled, lest the victim's curse  
    They should provoke—her piteous looks averse—  
They hastened her, the trembling bride of Death,

Before the altar; at her father's word  
They raised her, like a helpless kid, aloft,  
Drooping in spirit, whilst her raiment soft  
Flowed to the earth, and not a sound was heard.

But she, sore fain to speak, as she lay thus,  
And to the ground her saffron veil let fall,  
Fair as some fine-wrought marble, smote them all  
With deeply entreating eyes most piteous,

Moving their hearts; for often her pure voice  
In the high hall, her presence breathing peace,  
Would grace the third libation, to increase  
Her Father's name in song, and to rejoice

His heart, now cold, their hearts now moved in vain;—  
What need we more relate?—for what befell  
We neither saw nor much desire to tell;  
Not unaccomplished was the deadly strain

Of that old prophet's counsel. Future woe  
Justice requires, and retribution due  
Will come to pass. Then we must see it through;  
Till then, grief out of season, let it go.

## IN TENEBRIS.

THE trees are wild to-night ; the wind is loud  
In all their roaring branches ; on the right  
A low red moon ; and strangely clear and bright  
Through shattered fragments of forbidding cloud  
There wanes and ebbs the windy evening light ;  
But here the groaning darkness foils my sight  
Strainéd for her—my ear, intently bowed  
To catch a footfall in the gusty night,

But vexed with ominous phantoms ;—in the west  
Across those windswept fields of twilight gray  
Strange monsters—grazing horses—stand and stray ;  
One came to snuff my shoulder—not a guest  
That pleased me well, but frightened soon away ;—  
And now the heavens are drained of stormy day ;  
Night still more awful grows on such a quest  
For the impatient soul to brook delay.

But, lo, from that dense black tempestuous wood,  
Behold she comes, O, true beyond compare !—  
What, feet behind thee, Love ?—nay, like to scare  
The boldest heart upon a night so rude  
Those driven leaves.—I thought, But will she dare  
To come to-night ?—A man might well despair  
To watch the mouth and grisly solitude  
Of dark Avernus for a thing so fair.

## HEIRLOOM.

**I**N the hour of change and travail we, remembering thy face,

Fain would nerve our strainéd purpose with the heaven-descended grace,

Virtue, strength, in thee perfected, of thy pure and gentle race.

Ever taught by her who loved thee, there were mingled in our blood

Those high dreams and aspirations; thee through her we understood :—

“ All his soul was bowed within him worshipping the great and good.”

“ Much, had he been spared, for heaven, much he would have done for man ;

“ Has the mantle of your Father fallen on his children— can

“ You the work to fuller issues carry on which he began ? ”

Still to thee, and her aspiring love, O teach us to be true;

Thy great work and last commandment let us not forget to do ;

From the old world thy ancestral virtue bringing to the new.

Thine a race, like some clear river, from its far retiréd source

Long with cities unfamiliar, held upon an equal course,  
From the tributary heavens drawing silent strength and  
force ;

Not in dissipating uses, shoals of noisy action hurled ;  
Virtue there, and meditation, lay through flowery  
pastures curled,

Peaceful waters undiverted, unpolluted by the world ;

And, though vowed in all its sources from of old to every  
art,

Awed by God, the passion ripened slowly, bearing little  
part

In those simple lives, that inward vision, of the pure in  
heart ;

Who, like lovers to the relic of a passion old and gray,  
Into ancient forms breathed faith and virtue, clinging  
day by day

Closer to the sweet tradition as the substance passed  
away.

Since thy race in thee was wedded to as fair a sister  
stream,

'Twixt new shores, to larger issues, it conducts the early  
dream,

Nascent types inaugurating where the old appeared  
supreme ;

Still, though less direct a witness of eternal God to man,  
Dreamers, but the poet dreamer rather than the puritan ;  
Dreamers from the mighty rearward hurried to the  
drooping van ;

You from God in heaven, but we from God in you  
deriving our

Laws, traditions, aspirations—power, if ever any power  
From the father's veins descending, may become the  
childrens' dower.—

Power there is, a draft on virtue ; by the just decrees of  
Fate

Virtue labour, genius virtue follows ; state succeeds to  
state ;

'Tis the sons of virtuous parents only who are wise or  
great.

Power there is, a draft on virtue ; genius—else were  
genius none—

Born of love, the consummation of the mystic Three in  
One ;

God the Holy Ghost proceeding as of old from God the  
Son.

Labour, the probation first of God the Father, is the  
root,

Virtue, love, the glorious flowers of human progress ;  
absolute

Truth and beauty, manners, arts, and letters are the  
golden fruit.

Then, when power self-conscious, genius self-admiring  
grows, and art

Self-directed speaks a language not the language of the  
heart ;

When her natural grace the maiden forfeits to enact a  
part,

'Tis the Fall of man—the winter of the spirit ;—paradise  
Lost again to erring mortals ; 'tis that sin for which the  
price

Love must still come down to render in the appointed sacrifice.

'Tis the tragedy of Eden ever on a higher plane  
Re-enacted—knowledge by the fact of knowledge made  
in vain  
Ere 'tis disciplined by labour and by love redeemed again.

Cycles these and epicycles of the spirit; circular  
Orbits, loops, and retrogressions—linked each to all  
they are,  
Satellites to shining planets, planets to the parent star.

Individuals and races, races and the human race  
Thus their mystic evolutions suffer, terms of power and  
grace,  
Terms of retrogression, punctual each to the assignéd  
place.

You the crescent phase accomplished; you on the  
ascending arc  
Left us to complete the shining orbit; you the sacred  
spark  
Nursed—let us fan high the beacon ere it fades into the  
dark.

From your lovely old-world gardens, spreading many a  
pleasant rood  
Lawns, white paths, and flowering alleys; from your  
peaceful homes that stood  
Ivy-wreathed and massive, monumental of the just and  
good;—

Homes in many a latter summer linked with our childish  
loves;

Pebbled yards and stabled horses ; morning from the garden groves

Through our lattice windows streaming murmurous with the choral doves ;

Homes to city nurtured children still a golden memory ; Walls of fruit and crystal fountains ; cedars rearing dark and high

From the smooth green sward mysterious cones of night against the sky ;

Curious attics, trusty servants ;—treasures quaint that seemed to mock

Time and change—to breathe and tell us of an old and gentle stock ;

In the hall the branchéd antlers, on the stairs the cuckoo clock ;

At the table gentle faces, lovely china, homely fare—  
No base economy, no sinful luxury was suffered there—  
Afterwards the glorious Bible reading and the silent prayer :—

From those homes where virtue native as the virgin flowers had been

Where, above its wharfs and bridges, some far river flows between

Wood-emboweréd hills and fertile pastures ever fresh and green,

Coming as the grateful river cometh to the thirsty plain—  
Cities, where it flows, are founded, harvests planted, not in vain—

With the world of men and fervid city life you mixed again.

Withered facts upon the living waters of the soul in you  
Lived again to all their ancient uses luminous and true ;  
Church and state, laws, institutions, arts, and letters,  
    rose anew.

Parliaments, kings, prophets, priests, and poets—all you  
    heard and saw

Childlike were in you transfigured, coming with  
    mysterious awe

More divinely to interpret, strictly to fulfill, the law.

From your unadornéd worship, from your hours of silent  
    prayer,

Having learned the secret meaning, now you came to  
    claim a share

Of that age-long music unto which the human soul is  
    heir ;

First in solemn rites and symbols learning how frail  
    sense affords

Strength and rapture to the spirit—listening to the  
    mighty chords

Of some vast cathedral organ wedded to tremendous  
    words ;

Litanies, and psalms, and anthems ; words and voices  
    that express

Souls of old-world prophets, poets, martyrs ; voices of  
    distress ;

Words of hope and consolation ; voices lifted up to bless ;

Valued not by you as perfect truth—the wisdom pure  
    and whole

Of God—but man's rude efforts darkly to approach the  
    shining goal ;

Beautiful surmises, fruitful errors, of the human soul.

But that one pure voice and lonely, for so many drowned and lost

Midst the world's conflicting voices, you obeyed and valued most,

"I am God" proclaiming, preaching God in man, the Holy Ghost.

As of old to God existing, therefore in your hearts began That sweet doctrine of the eternal sacredness of man to man;

Many, thence in need of comfort, where those healing waters ran,

Came—before how often disappointed—came and quenched their thirst;

In your eyes your God apparent with the souls of men conversed,

What was true in each compelling, what was good perceiving first;

What you loved receiving gladly; never thinking to pretend

Joy in what you loved not; friendship never seeking for an end

Not the highest; therefore never disappointed in a friend;

What was vile, though disregarded in the light of those pure eyes,

All more dreadfully confounding; startled from their frail disguise

Evil thoughts and guilty motives steal away in dumb surprise—

In the course of that sheer virtue, found unready, pale and blanch,

Like a traveller in some tangled passage threatened root and branch

By the sudden smoke and thunder of an Alpine avalanche.

And, the meanest, that impending ruin spared, the expected rod

Of your wrath to mercy turning, less unworthily they trod

Earth, as though in some dread vision they had nearer been to God.

Not with you the sword descended, nor did you espouse the ways,

Prone to loud but feeble virtue, of our pulpit—platform—days;

Yours the dumb rebuke of knowledge painfully withholding praise.

And, in love with all things lovely, slow to wrath, your hearts were warm

Not alone with loyal passion, nor the heat of blind reform ;

But the calm in which you brooded was the calm before a storm.

Coming without observation, from the mighty Past you drew

To the threshold of the Future, all the virtue summed in you

Of the old-world's deep intention to the welfare of the new.

You the storm-cloud were, the shining sword suspended  
by a thread ;  
You the stream, so long remotely making in its moorland  
bed,  
Now above the iron harness gathered to a mighty head.  
We, could we the vast pretension kindle with a holy awe  
On the grace and power within us of a virtuous race to  
draw,  
Could we but believe the lovely omen and obey the law,  
Were the grateful rain, the rolling thunder, and the  
falling sword ;  
We the current of your long confinéd meditations poured  
In music ; the precipitated virtue, and the spoken word.  
When in us your power is waning, teach us what the  
living source ;  
When in us the warrior planet retrogrades upon his  
course—  
When the tragedy of Eden overtakes us—reinforce  
You our lives with single-hearted faith and passion ;  
keep us true  
To the high traditions, fair examples, we derive from  
you,  
That in us your cumulative virtue, issuing freely through,  
Purge the world of arts and letters, drive the vast  
machine of state,  
To our weak resolves and fevered efforts adding force  
and weight,  
Like a noble head of water falling on the wheel of Fate.



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